

ize Judea. This did not suffice, and it took two miracles more to get them to do general mission work,—to evangelize their own continent. We have partially and briefly shown how the apostles were to get God's thought of evangelization. It was some eleven or twelve years after Pentecost before we find an ideal missionary society. We might call this society at Antioch *the ideal missionary constituency*.

Is it not strange that the mother church at Jerusalem was not the one chosen to form the first missionary society? It was unfit for the center of the missionary work. It was too narrow, too much encrusted with Jewish tradition, too much partiality for Jerusalem. They had the old Jewish concentration instead of disbursement. They did not have the go-spell but a come-spell. Instead of *go* in all the world, it was *come* from all the world to Jerusalem. Hence, God could not use that kind of a church as the center of evangelization. God went to Antioch to form the first missionary constituency. The way this church was started will account for God's going there to begin his great work. This church at Antioch was started by men and women, "gossiping the gospel." They knew but little of the Jewish religion. *It was Jesus only with them.* When the apostles at Jerusalem heard of this self constituted mission point, they sent Barnabas to them. Perhaps the most fitted of all for the mission field. He was the least conservative, a big hearted business man. Just the kind best fitted for the field and to arouse missionary interest. He first gave himself to the Lord, then all he had. Then he sent for Paul, the most fitted of all the apostles for the missionary field. He was free born, converted, directed of the Lord, and was told then that his mission was to give the gospel to the Gentiles. Hence, he doubtless gave them the broadest ideas of God's plan that was ever given to any church. This church was so Christ-like that the members were nicknamed Christians. They so lived the life of Christ that they named the church after him. Let us notice the members of this missionary constituency. Barnabas, the big hearted business man. Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles. Simeon, the colored man, —probably the one who bore the cross on Calvary. Lucius, the Cyrene, a native of Africa who gave us the third gospel. The parable of the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan show what kind of missionary ideas he had. Just the man for such a missionary movement. Manean, the brother of Herod,—from the upper ten family—to show that the gospel is for the rich as well as the poor.

Being of wide nationality, and all having missionary hearts, doubtless they were offering missionary prayers when they received the divine call. They were not arguing nor discussing modes and plans. They did not have rigid parliamentary law to keep their tempers down or to keep them from quarreling. They were not asking God to help them by sanctioning their plans and then

help them to carry them out. *They were down on their faces before God, fasting and praying, waiting for orders.* It does not require much wisdom to see the difference between this plan and the plan usually adopted at the present time.

To illustrate: A man dreamed that he had seen Jesus in glory, and was told that the only way that he could receive the help he wanted and the glory of Jesus was to go to him. He tried to run to him but the angel of the Lord pulled him back. He tried every way he knew but he could not get to Jesus. All seemed in vain, then the angel said the only way to get to Jesus is on your knees.

The only way that we ever can see God's plan of evangelization and reap his harvest is on our knees. Not by human plans, not by human organizations, not by resolutions, not even by swift and willing feet, but humbly before God waiting for his power, his love, and his spirit.

While they were thus down on their knees before God the Holy Spirit said, "separate me Barnabas and Paul to the work to which I have called them," and after fasting and prayer and the laying on of hands the Spirit sent them forth. The Spirit made choice of the two best men of the whole church and sent them. They would have been the most useful at home, hence it required an unselfish church to send them.

From here started the great missionary constituency which in less than twenty years shook the whole world. Even after this marvellous organization and divine call and sending forth it required three more miracles before they could grasp the great thought of God. They were miraculously stopped in the general mission field and by a vision called into the foreign field. See Acts 16.

God permitted a contention to arise between Barnabas and Paul so that there would be two great missionary movements instead of one. One under Paul and Barnabas the other under Silas and Mark. From this time on they seemed to have grasped God's thought and with a burning missionary zeal such as the world had never before witnessed they pressed forward to give the whole gospel to a whole world. They surmounted all obstacles and knew no defeat; and in less than twenty years they gave the gospel to almost all the then known world.

Soon after their death the church went to sleep. The Lord waited long and patiently for the church to again grasp his great thought, but all in vain. So after waiting nearly eighteen hundred years, he has thrown down in the present century a hundred walls each as great as the walls of Jericho, and opened all the heathen countries of the world to evangelization. Now after seeing all these plain scripture, Matt. 28: 19, 20; Mark 16: 15, 16; Acts 1: 8; and seeing how God stirred them at Jerusalem, Act 10: 11, 13, 15, 16, and then waiting for nearly 1800 years and then seeing the walls thrown down,—it stirs my soul within me. The harvest never was so great, the fields never were so ripe as at present.

*I. The Present Opportunity* My earnest prayer to God is that he may give you eyes to see God's providences—modern miracles—in connection with the spread of the gospel in our time. Every man who will open his eyes to see and acquaint himself with missionary history must see and be intensely impressed with the fact, that never before in all the history of the world has God so ripened the fields for immediate harvest. If we do not reap now, God may soon close the doors and our opportunity may be gone forever.

The germ of modern missions was planted in the reformation. With it began the spread of Protestantism. The printing press came into use about the same time. In a prison cell, Wycliffe cut the chains to the Bible, then it was given the wings of the press, and it flew to the ends of the earth with its message of love and salvation. In less than one century the Bible has been printed into 250 different languages and distributed among those that never knew God's word. Wycliffe gave the Bible to England, Luther to Germany, and both to the United States. Thro the influence of these powers China was unlocked to missions in 1858. By this one treaty, one third of the population of the earth was open to evangelization. The Berlin Committee, presided over by Prince Bismark, opened up the heart of Africa to missions in 1884. Since that time the whole of Africa is open to evangelization. This was the answer to the dying prayer of Livingstone ten years before. The population of Africa is unknown, but Stanley went from Zanzibar to Panama, distance of 7000 miles and came in contact with thousands of the inhabitants daily, but did not find one that ever heard of the name of Christ.

All the Roman Catholic nations have been shattered. France tried to restore the Roman Empire under Napoleon, but failed, and today it is a weak and decaying power. There is not a Roman Catholic power in all Europe but is weak and growing weaker.

*Mohammedanism.* Turkey is the "sick man of the East," and for a hundred years it has been weakening. Fifty years ago, it was impossible to preach the gospel in Turkey; and it meant death for a Moslem to accept the Christian religion. Today this is all obsolete.

*Japan.* No such strides were ever known before in all the history of the world as it has made in the last 35 years, since it has opened to evangelization by the United States.

*Siam.* Siam was closed against the gospel for half a century, and since opening its door is now almost equal to Japan in development.

*India.* Less than a century ago, Judson was turned from India by Europe. God broke this India Commission and allowed the Sepoy Rebellion to punish Europe for this selfishness. This compelled Europe to extend her power over the entire of India. Since that time the whole of India with her 300,000,000 is thrown open to evangelization. Now there are 15,000 missionaries in India. But what are they among so many.